



OFFICE of EDUCATION INNOVATION

Renewal Application Packet

for Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools

Spring 2015

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Introduction

A charter school authorized by the Mayor's Office of Indianapolis may begin the charter renewal application process in the summer prior to its seventh year of operation. Each school's charter expires 45 days after the last instructional day of the current charter. For each school seeking renewal, the Mayor will issue a decision during the school's seventh year of operation. If the charter is renewed, the current Charter Attachment B is updated using all current amendments and information from the Charter Renewal Application Section B to reflect the most up to date description of the school's model. The renewal charter becomes the official Charter Attachment C.

If the Mayor determines a school should not receive a full, seven-year renewal, but a shorter conditional renewal, the school must receive a site visit at least once during the time allotted by the Mayor. The school will not receive specific conditions for meeting renewal at the time of the extension, but will be held to the full Performance Framework, just as with the first application for renewal.

The charter renewal decision is based on an array of evidence collected over the charter term pertaining to the four Core Questions set forth in the *Performance Framework* for Mayor-sponsored charter schools:

1. *Is the educational program a success?*
2. *Is the organization in sound fiscal health?*
3. *Is the organization effective and well-run?*
4. *Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*

In addition, a fifth important area of focus for the renewal application and decision is the school's *strategies for sustaining success and continuing to improve* over the next charter term.

Renewal decisions are based on the *Performance Framework* in its entirety. The Mayor's Office does not use a formula for determining the number of areas in which an applicant meets or exceeds standard in order to make renewal decisions. Each decision is completely individual to that school.

The Mayor's Office requires charter schools to apply for renewal to fulfill two key purposes: (1) To present any important new or supplemental information pertaining to the above Core Questions, to enable a more comprehensive assessment of school performance; and (2) To articulate a school's strategies and capacities for sustaining success and continuing to improve over the next charter term.

The renewal application is not meant to be a redundant exercise. The Mayor's Office will base its evaluation of each school's performance on the body of data amassed over the charter term. The extensive evidence already collected allows each school's renewal application to be substantially streamlined. Therefore, schools' renewal applications should be focused on only *new* or *supplemental* information, as well as a description of the school's long-term sustainability and plans for ongoing improvement.

The renewal application should be concise and complete, not requiring further explanation or clarification by the school. All necessary documentation should be included as attachments, which should be limited to information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence the Mayor's Office has already collected on the school's performance, and/or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies discussed in the application.

This Renewal Application Packet provides general content guidance and submission instructions for each school's renewal application. The Mayor's Office advises schools to follow the content guidance carefully. Doing so will enable each school to assemble a well-focused application that will be most helpful to its case for renewal, while avoiding redundant material and unnecessary work for the school.

In addition to the general guidance contained in this packet, the Mayor's Office will meet with each school's leadership to discuss particular information that the school should prepare for its renewal application, tailored to the school's circumstances.

Content Overview

The primary content of each school's renewal application should provide clear and succinct narrative responses to the Core Questions outlined in this packet. The application is divided into two sections:

1. **Section A: Performance Review.** Parts of this section are *required* for some schools, and *optional* for others (explained below).
2. **Section B: Sustainability and Improvement.** This section is *required* for all schools.

Following is an overview of the expectations for each section.

A. Performance Review

Section A of the renewal application focuses on the four Core Questions and accompanying sub-indicators of the [Performance Framework](#) for Mayor-sponsored charter schools. In forming its charter renewal recommendations, the Mayor's Office will review each school's cumulative body of evidence in all areas of the Performance Framework.

Which schools must respond to Section A?

The Mayor's Office will provide each school with a formal guidance letter indicating whether and how it must respond to Section A. Generally, schools will only be required to provide responses for indicators where the school failed to meet standard on the 2013-2014 accountability report and its most recent Core Question 4 evaluation (i.e., obtained a rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Approaching Standard").

For the indicators that your school is instructed to complete, you should explain progress in each of the particular areas in which the school previously did not meet standard, providing clear evidence demonstrating that the school now meets the standard. Alternatively, schools that do not yet meet the standard for a particular area should a) note why, b) detail the steps you have taken and plan to take in order to ensure attainment of the standard, and c) explain the timeline on which you expect to meet the standard.

In explaining attainment of or progress toward standards, *refer specifically* to the standards and criteria set forth in the Performance Framework. You may limit responses for Section A to areas specifically identified by the Mayor's Office in the formal guidance letter (generally, those in which the school did not meet standards in the 2013-2014 accountability report and most recent Core Question 4 evaluation).

Which schools may respond to Section A?

Section A is *not required* for schools that were rated as "Meeting Standard" in *all* areas (including sub-questions) of the Performance Framework on the 2013-2014 accountability report and most recent Core Question 4 evaluation.

If, however, you would like to provide supplemental data or contextual information to augment your school's record with the Mayor's Office for any areas of the Performance Framework, you may do so by responding to the relevant questions within Section A. Provide compelling evidence to support any responses of this nature.

B. Sustainability and Improvement

All schools are required to respond to the Critical Questions in Section B.

Renewal Process

Once a school submits its renewal application, the process of renewal decision-making will proceed as follows:

<p>Statement of Intent to Seek Renewal [Due by May 1, 2015]</p> <p>School submits <i>Statement of Intent to Seek Renewal</i>. The statement should be a letter on school letterhead signed by the chair of the school's board, indicating school's intent to seek renewal of its charter. The statement does not need to provide any specific details or plans.</p>
<p>Renewal Application Preparation Meeting [After receipt of Intent to Seek Renewal]</p> <p>Mayor's Office meets with school leadership (designees of the board and administration) to discuss particular information required for the school's renewal application.</p>
<p>Mayor's Office Provides School with Guidance Letter [After receipt of Intent to Seek Renewal]</p> <p>The Mayor's Office provides the school with a formal letter providing customized guidance for the school's renewal application.</p>
<p>School Submits Renewal Application [Due July 10, 2015]</p> <p>School submits renewal application to Mayor's Office.</p>
<p>Renewal Application Review</p> <p>Mayor's Office reviews renewal application, collects any additional data needed, and prepares draft renewal report on the school.</p>
<p>Draft Renewal Reports Provided to School [August 24, 2015]</p> <p>Mayor's Office provides draft report to the school for review.</p>
<p>School Responds to Draft Report [August 31, 2015]</p> <p>School submits in writing any comments, corrections or clarifications in response to draft report.</p>
<p>Post Notice of Public Hearing [Five (5) business days before the public hearing]</p> <p>School must post notice of the public hearing in the same manner they post notice of board meetings.</p>
<p>Public Hearing [September / October, 2015]</p> <p>Public hearing on the charter renewal application held by Charter Schools Board. Applicant for renewal makes short presentations; Board has opportunity to ask questions; public has opportunity to comment; Board will vote on a renewal recommendation for the Mayor.</p>

Renewal Reports and Recommendation Provided to Mayor

[October / November, 2015]

Mayor's Office presents final renewal report and recommendations to the Mayor

Mayor's Decision

[November, 2015]

All decisions concerning renewal of a school's charter shall be made at the discretion of the Mayor in accordance with applicable law.¹ Renewal decisions will be issued by January of each school's seventh year of operation.

Non-Renewal

In the event of non-renewal, the Mayor's Office will follow a closure protocol to guide the closure process.

¹ See Charter School Agreement, Section 1.3.

Submission Instructions

Charter renewal applications must be submitted to the Mayor's Office in **both print and electronic form**. Submit the application, including all attachments and certifications, on a single USB drive. In addition, provide five (5) printed, bound, double-sided copies of the application (including all attachments and certifications) to:

Indianapolis Mayor's Office
Attn: Brandon Brown, Director of Charter Schools
200 E. Washington Street, Suite 2501
Indianapolis IN 46204

Format

- The renewal application narrative should not exceed 50 pages, excluding the School Overview, Executive Summary and/or attachments.
 - The application should include a completed School Overview (provided in this packet) and an Executive Summary not to exceed two pages each.
 - Attachments should not exceed 25 pages.
 - The application must include the Assurances Statement included in this packet. The statement must be signed by the Chair of the school's Board.
 - The application should have standard one-inch margins, be clearly paginated, and use no smaller than an 11-point font. Printed application pages must be double-sided. Each printed copy of the application must be either spiral bound or contained within a 3-ring binder.
 - Tables, graphs, and other data in the application must be clearly presented, clearly explained, and directly relevant to the text.
 - Any attachment should provide information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence the Mayor's Office has already collected on the school's performance, or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies discussed in Section B of the application. In addition, any attachment should be clearly referenced in the application and directly relevant to that part of the text.
 - The application should not include any photographs, pictures or news clips unless directly relevant to the text.
 - The electronic and print versions of the application should be identical in content, including all attachments and certifications. For the electronic version, consolidate all sections **into one single document** prior to submission.
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Charter Renewal Application Checklist

The renewal application should contain the following elements in the order shown:

- ✓ **School Overview**
 - ✓ **Executive Summary**
 - ✓ **Narrative Responses for Section A: Performance Review**
(if applicable – see guidance)
 - 1. *Is the educational program a success?*
 - 2. *Is the organization in sound fiscal health?*
 - 3. *Is the organization effective and well-run?*
 - 4. *Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*
 - ✓ **Narrative Responses for Section B: Sustainability and Improvement**
 - ✓ **Educational Service Provider questionnaire**
 - ✓ **Assurances Statement**
 - ✓ **Attachments**
-

Charter School Renewal Application

School Overview

School Name:

School address:

Mission Statement:

School Leader/Principal:

Chair/Board of Directors:

[illegible]

Charter Renewal Application: Core Questions

Not all schools are required to respond to the Core Questions in Section A. Review the guidance for each question to determine whether your school must – or may wish to – respond.

Section A: Performance Review

1. *Is the educational program a success?*

To determine whether each school's educational program is a success meriting charter renewal, the Mayor's Office will review the school's performance in each of the below areas set forth in the Performance Framework, applying the criteria detailed in the Framework rubrics:

Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success? (Elementary and Middle School)
1.1. Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?
1.2. Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth Model?
1.3. Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?
1.4. Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?
1.5. Is the school's attendance rate strong?
1.6. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?
1.7. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?

Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success? (High School)
1.1. Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?
1.2. *Indicator 1.2 does not apply to high school grades
1.3. Is the school preparing students to graduate from high school on time, and preparing those students who have not graduated on time to graduate within 5 years, as measured by Indiana's cohort graduation rate?
1.4. Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?
1.5. Is the school's attendance rate strong?
1.6. Is the school preparing students for college and careers?
1.7. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?

The Mayor's Office will review each school's cumulative body of evidence in these areas over the current charter term, including annual assessment data, site visit reports, and performance on school-specific goals, if applicable.

Any schools that did not meet standards (i.e., obtained a rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Approaching Standard") in any of the above-outlined areas in their 2013-2014 accountability report by the Mayor's Office are

required to explain their progress in these particular areas. If your school is in this category, you should provide clear evidence demonstrating that the school now meets the standard.

Alternatively, schools that do not yet meet the standard for a particular area should a) note why, b) detail the steps you have taken and plan to take in order to ensure attainment of the standard, and c) explain the timeline on which you expect to meet the standard. In explaining attainment of or progress toward standards, *refer specifically* to the standards and criteria set forth in the Performance Framework.

In addition, if you would like to provide supplemental data or contextual information to augment your school's record with the Mayor's Office for any of the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework, you may do so. Provide compelling evidence to support any responses of this nature.

Schools that were rated as "Meeting Standard" (i.e., obtained a rating of "Meets Standard" or "Exceeds Standard") in all the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework in their 2013-14 accountability report and are comfortable being judged by the relevant data on record with the Mayor's Office, are not required to respond to this content section.

2. Is the organization in sound fiscal health?

To determine whether each charter school is organizationally effective and well-run, the Mayor's Office will review the school's cumulative body of evidence in each of the below areas set forth in the Performance Framework, applying the criteria detailed in the Framework rubrics:

Core Question 2: Is the organization in sound fiscal health?
Financial Evaluation from 2010-12
2.1 Is the school in sound fiscal health?
Financial Evaluation from 2012-present
2.1. Short Term Health: Does the school demonstrate the ability to pay its obligations in the next 12 months?
2.2. Long Term Health: Does the organization demonstrate long term financial health?
2.3. Does the organization demonstrate it has adequate financial management and systems?

Any schools that did not meet standards (i.e., obtained a rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Approaching Standard") in any of the above-outlined areas in their 2013-14 accountability report by the Mayor's Office are *required* to explain their progress in these particular areas. If your school is in this category, you should provide clear evidence demonstrating that the school now meets the standard.

Alternatively, schools that do not yet meet the standard for a particular area should a) note why, b) detail the steps you have taken and plan to take in order to ensure attainment of the standard, and c) explain the timeline on which you expect to meet the standard. In explaining attainment of or progress toward standards, schools should *refer specifically* to the standards and criteria set forth in the Performance Framework.

In addition, if you would like to provide supplemental data or contextual information to augment your school's record with the Mayor's Office for any of the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework, you may do so. Provide compelling evidence to support any responses of this nature.

Schools that were rated as “Meeting Standard” (i.e., obtained a rating of “Meets Standard” or “Exceeds Standard”) in all the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework in their 2013-14 accountability report, and are comfortable being judged by the relevant data on record with the Mayor’s Office, are not required to respond to this content section.

3. Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?

Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?
3.1. Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?
3.2. Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?
3.3. Is the school’s board active and knowledgeable, and does it abide by appropriate policies, systems, and processes in its oversight?
3.4. Does the school’s board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?
3.5. Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?
3.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific non-academic goals?

To determine whether each charter school is meeting its operations and access obligations, the Mayor’s Office will review the school’s cumulative body of evidence in each of the below areas set forth in the Performance Framework, applying the criteria detailed in the Framework rubrics:

Any schools that did not meet standards (i.e., obtained a rating of “Does Not Meet Standard” or “Approaching Standard”) in any of the above-outlined areas in their 2013-14 accountability report by the Mayor’s Office are *required* to explain their progress in these particular areas. If your school is in this category, you should provide clear evidence demonstrating that the school now meets the standard.

Alternatively, schools that do not yet meet the standard for a particular area should a) note why, b) detail the steps you have taken and plan to take in order to ensure attainment of the standard, and c) explain the timeline on which you expect to meet the standard. In explaining attainment of or progress toward standards, *refer specifically* to the standards and criteria set forth in the Performance Framework.

In addition, if you would like to provide supplemental data or contextual information to augment your school’s record with the Mayor’s Office for any of the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework, you may do so. Provide compelling evidence to support any responses of this nature.

Schools that were rated as “Meeting Standard” (i.e., obtained a rating of “Meets Standard” or “Exceeds Standard”) in all the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework in their 2013-14 accountability report, and are comfortable being judged by the relevant data on record with the Mayor’s Office, are not required to respond to this content section.

4. Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

To determine whether each charter school is providing the appropriate conditions for success, the Mayor's Office will review the school's performance in each of the below areas set forth in the Performance Framework, applying the criteria detailed in the Framework rubrics:

Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?
4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?
4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?
4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?
4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?
4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?
4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?
4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?
4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?
4.9. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with special needs?
4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?

Any schools that did not meet standards (i.e., obtained a rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Approaching Standard") in any of the above-outlined areas from their most recent site visit evaluation (Core Question 4) are *required* to explain their progress in these particular areas. If your school is in this category, you should provide clear evidence demonstrating that the school now meets the standard.

Alternatively, schools that do not yet meet the standard for a particular area should a) note why, b) detail the steps you have taken and plan to take in order to ensure attainment of the standard, and c) explain the timeline on which you expect to meet the standard. In explaining attainment of or progress toward standards, *refer specifically* to the standards and criteria set forth in the Performance Framework.

In addition, if you would like to provide supplemental data or contextual information to augment your school's record with the Mayor's Office for any of the above-outlined areas of the Performance Framework, you may do so. Provide compelling evidence to support any responses of this nature.

Schools that were rated as "Meeting Standard" (i.e., obtained a rating of "Meets Standard" or "Exceeds Standard") in all the above-outlined areas of their most recent site visit report and are comfortable being judged by the relevant data on record with the Mayor's Office, are not required to respond to this content section.

Section B: Sustainability and Improvement

All schools applying for renewal are required to respond to the following items, describing how you will sustain success and continue to improve over the next charter term. Responses should demonstrate that the school is planning carefully and strategically for the future and has the capacity to achieve long-term success.

In addition to the general areas noted below and based on concerns in previous years, the Mayor's Office may identify particular matters for each school to address in this section.

1. *Sustaining Success*

Describe your school's plans and strategies for sustaining and continuing to build academic, organizational and operational success over the next charter term. Explain how the school will build and achieve long-term sustainability and success in:

- a. The governing board
- b. The leadership team
- c. The teaching staff
- d. Academic achievement
- e. Any other areas that the Mayor's Office has asked your school to discuss, or that you wish to discuss

In describing these strategies for sustaining success, specify implementation timelines or timeframes as well as responsible individuals or parties.

2. *Ongoing Improvement*

Describe how your school will continue to improve academically, organizationally and operationally over the next charter term. Identify particular weaknesses, challenges and areas for improvement, and detail the school's plans for addressing each of these needs.

Responses here should demonstrate that the school has reflected honestly and critically on areas and ways to improve. In describing these plans and strategies for ongoing improvement, specify implementation timelines or timeframes as well as responsible individuals or parties.

Attachments

Required Attachments

- Assurances Statement [form provided below]
- Five-year budget [optional template is [linked here](#); otherwise, schools may use their own]

Optional Attachments *(not to exceed 25 pages)*

Schools may attach additional information that a) meaningfully augments the body of evidence the Mayor's Office has already collected on the school's performance, or b) illustrates or supports plans or strategies discussed in Section B. Any attachment should be clearly referenced in the application and directly relevant to that part of the text.

Assurances Statement

This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant for renewal and submitted with the Renewal Application. An application will be considered incomplete if it is not accompanied by the Assurances Form signed by an authorized individual.

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for charter renewal for _____ (name of school) to be located at _____ (location of school) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further I understand that, if awarded a renewal, the school:

1. will not charge tuition, fees, or other mandatory payments for attendance at the charter school, or for participation in its programs, except for a preschool program or a latch key program. IC 20-5.5-8-2
 2. will enroll any eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case, each timely applicant will be given equal chance of admission. IC 20-5.5-5-4
 3. will provide the number of students enrolled in the charter school, the name of each student and the school corporation in which each student resides to the Indiana Department of Education by the date established thereby. IC 20-5.5-7-3
 4. will submit an annual report to the Indiana Department of Education in the form required thereby. IC 20-5.5-9-1
 5. will submit attendance records, student performance data, financial information, any information necessary to comply with state and federal government requirements, and any other information specified in the charter to the Mayor's Office. IC 20-5.5-9-5
 6. will participate in the Indiana State Teachers' Retirement Fund in accordance with IC 21-6.1 and the Public Employees Retirement Fund in accordance with IC 5-10.3. IC 20-5.5-6-7, and/or another comparable and appropriate pension or retirement fund approved by the Mayor's Office.
 7. will maintain separate accountings of all funds received and disbursed by the school. IC 20-5.5-7-1
 8. will ensure 90% of individuals who teach hold a license to teach in a public school in Indiana under I.C. 20-6.13 or are in the process of obtaining a license to teach in a public school in Indiana under the transition to teaching program set forth in IC 20-6.1-3.11. IC 20-24-6-5
 9. will permit certified employees at the charter school the opportunity to organize and bargain collectively under I.C. 20-7.5. IC 20-5.5-6-3
 10. will operate with the organizer serving in the capacity of fiscal agent for the charter school and in compliance with generally accepted government accounting principles.
 11. will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
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12. will indemnify and hold harmless the City of Indianapolis (including without limitation, the Mayor's Office), the State of Indiana, all school corporations providing funds to the charter school, and their officers, directors, agents and employees, and any successors and assigns from any and all liability, cause of action, or other injury or damage in any way relating to the charter school or its operation.
13. will follow all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination on the basis of the following: disability, race, color, gender, national origin, religion and ancestry. IC 20-5.5-2-2
14. will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, that are applicable to it.
15. will be non-religious in its programs, admissions policies, governance, employment practices and all other operations, and its curriculum will be completely secular.
16. will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students who are limited English proficient (LEP), including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, that are applicable to it.
17. will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school.

Authorized Representative's Signature

Date